

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

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TAGS: EFIS CA
SUBJECT: THE SEAL HUNT: DIRECT ACTION BEGINS
REF: HALIFAX 0055

1. FOR CALIFORNIANS, AN UNFAILING HARBINGER OF SPRING IS MAR 19, THE FEAST DAY OF ST JOSEPH, WHEN THE SWALLOWS RETURN TO CAPISTRANO. SPRING'S HARBINGER IN ATLANTIC CANADA, HOWEVER, IS A MOVEABLE FEAST. IT IS A FEAST WHICH BEGINS AT THE END OF FEBRUARY OR THE BEGINNING OF MARCH WHEN THE SEALERS AND THE SEALING VESSELS BEGIN TO CONVERGE ON ST. JOHN S IN PREPARATION FOR THE ANNUAL SEAL HUNT.

2. A RELATIVELY RECENT AND RATHER UNFORTUNATE SPIN-OFF OF THE SEALING INDUSTRY IS THE PROTEST INDUSTRY WHICH, DESPITE WHAT SEEMS TO BE AMPLE AND CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT THE SEAL HUNT IS NOT ENDANGERING THE SPECIES AND IS NOT CRUEL, PERSISTS IN ITS DEFAMATION OF CANADIAN SEALERS. IN THE OFF SEASON WHEN MORE DIRECT ACTION IS NOT POSSIBLE, THE PROTESTORS MUST, PERFORCE, CONTENT THEMSELVES WITH SIMPLE SLANDER AND--AS OCCASIONS PERMIT--DROWNING OUT WITH SHEER LUNG POWER THE REASONED
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ARGUMENTS OF THOSE WHOSE VIEWS DO NOT COINCIDE WITH THEIRS. COME HINTS OF SPRING, HOWEVER, WITH SEALERS ON THE MOVE, THE PROTEST INDUSTRY BEGINS TO PRACTICE A BIT OF DIRECT ACTION. SOME OF IT WAS ON DISPLAY OUTSIDE THE WINDOWS OF THIS POST ON FEB 27.

3. SEVERAL SEALING VESSELS ARE HOME-PORTED IN HALIFAX

AND ARE DOCKED NEAR THE CONSULATE GENERAL. AS TWO OF THESE SHIPS LEFT THEIR DOCK ON FEB 27 TO HEAD FOR ST. JOHN S IN ORDER TO PICK UP THEIR CONTINGENTS OF SEALERS, THREE HIGHSPEED RUBBER DINGHIES WITH OUTBOARD MOTORS BEGAN RECKLESS MANEUVERS UNDER THE BOWS OF THE VESSELS IN ATTEMPTS TO HALT THEIR DEPARTURES. THE DINGHIES WERE MANNED BY MEMBERS OF THE GREENPEACE FOUNDATION OF VANCOUVER, ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSED TO THE SEAL HUNT. CREWMEMBERS ABOARD THE SEALERS RETALIATED WITH WATER HOSES AND OBJECTS THROWN FROM ABOVE. A CANADIAN COAST GUARD VESSEL HOVERED NEARBY BUT DID NOT INTERFERE AS THE SEALERS SLOWLY PICKED UP SPEED AND LEFT THE HARBOR.

4. THE CITY OF ST. JOHN'S, NFLD, IS PLANNING A BIG SEND-OFF ON MAR 5 WHEN THE SEALING FLEET IS SCHEDULED TO LEAVE THAT PORT, ENROUTE TO THE PACK ICE AT THE FRONT WHERE THE SEAL PUPS ARE WHELPED. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE GREENPEACE FOUNDATION AND BRIAN DAVIES INTL FUND FOR ANIMAL WELFARE ARE PLANNING WAYS TO DISRUPT THE FESTIVITIES IN ST JOHN S. AFTER THAT THEY WILL DOUBTLESS ENGAGE ONCE AGAIN THIS YEAR IN WHATEVER DISRUPTIVE DIRECT ACTION THEY CAN IN ST. ANTHONY, NFLD, AND--GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY--IN AMONG THE SEALS AT THE FRONT. THE MONTH OF MARCH, IT SEEMS, BRINGS TWITTERS TO CALIFORNIA AND TWITS TO NEWFOUNDLAND.

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5. DRAFTER: JHMOORE.
MOORE

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